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Kennedy, Macmillan Still Waiting

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Washington — When British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan emerged from the White House last night, he and President Kennedy, despite seven hours of talk, were still confronted with a waiting game in Laos.

The war in that remote Asian kingdom is the most crucial single question before the two Western leaders but they were silent — at least their spokesmen were — last night.

The silence disguised the fact that the answer to what will happen in Laos does not yet lie in Washington, London, Moscow or Peking, but still depends on what happens in Laos, 10,000 miles away.

Mr. Macmillan will be in this country through the weekend. He expects to spend some time talking with his President about Laos today. But the British Prime Minister leaves this weekend, whether there will be a decisive agreement very likely will depend on the course of fighting in Laos in the next few days.

It is no secret that the two leaders await further word from the Russians on ending the fighting in Laos, where American-armed loyal Laotian troops are fighting Communist-armed Pathet Lao troops.

It has been reported that the Russians "appear" to agree "in principle" on a cease-fire in Laos. The British traditionally refuse to commit themselves on anything hypothetical and may wish to know precisely what Russian diplomatic policy on Laos will be and precisely what the military situation is. The

United States is taking a similar position.

This appears to be the significance of the present fighting in Laos and of the Kennedy-Macmillan silence yesterday. Each side, without saying so, has determined to strengthen his military position on the theory that one cannot win points at the negotiating table if he is losing them on the battlefield.

The Western assumption momentarily is that the Russians want a cease-fire but a test of this assumption will not be that Russia ends all supply to the rebel forces in Laos or even that the rebels will stop fighting completely. The fact is that the West has a stake in keeping up some of the military pressure since up to now the loyal Laotian troops have been retreating steadily and this is a disastrous way to approach a negotiating table.

Thus, the United States has reason to hope for some military gains in Laos before any formal cease-fire.

It appears that this game will be played by both sides — within limits. On the Communist side, they should not push much farther than they already have. On the Western side, they should not do more than to regain some of the key points recently lost. If either side goes beyond this, it will be accepted that no cease-fire will come about and that the war will go to its military conclusion and consequences.

Because of this, the Communists continue to parachute supplies to the Pathet Lao. At the same time, the loyalist troops have launched a counter-offensive.

While Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Macmillan awaited word from Moscow and from Vientiane, they did talk of some things. Most of the seven hours was in the presence of high-ranking diplomats from both sides, but for 40 minutes, after lunch, the two men were alone.

According to spokesmen for both sides the conference yesterday touched upon these subjects:

1. Admission of Red China to the U.N. The two countries were careful to describe this discussion delicately but it was plain that there continues to be a difference — one spoken in plain words at the word and said he preferred "divergence" on the subject. Britain recognizes Red China and is under domestic political pressure to vote for her admission to the U.N. The United States does not recognize Red China and has had a firm policy against her admission to the U.N.

No Agreement Reached

In effect, diplomatic spokesmen said last night that no agreement was reached but none would be tried until next fall when the subject comes up in the U.N. If the United States policy of keeping the subject off the U.N. agenda fails, as it may for the first time, the British and Americans will have to decide then — but on separate paths.

2. NATO. Both agreed on the need to change NATO from the alliance first created to hold together a shattered, depressed Europe to one serving the needs of a prosperous Europe in a world of nuclear weapons and missiles. If the two men decided how this was to be done, their spokesmen did not say so.

3. The Russian attack on the U.N. This was a fairly full discussion by both sides and it was agreed by experts and leaders on both sides that the Russian proposal to replace Dag Hammarskjold, U.N. secretary general, with a three-man ruling committee seems to be a new Soviet policy on all organizations wielding power that affects her. According to their spokesmen, the two leaders were in full agreement in holding fast to complete support of Mr. Hammarskjold and the present operations of the U.N.

Difficult to Determine

4. Underdeveloped countries and independence for colonial states. The substance of these discussions was difficult to determine, possibly because in such discussion, inevitably the problem of France and Algeria would be important and neither the United States nor Britain wishes to rock Charles de Gaulle's boat at this juncture by public pronouncements. It was said rather blandly that both men agreed that aid to underdeveloped countries needs to be more coordinated among free nations and that colonial states should be helped to independence but in an orderly way.

Thus ended the first day of meetings between two powerful western leaders. Afterward, Mrs. Kennedy gave a tea for Mrs. Macmillan. Later, British Ambassador and Lady, Caccia gave a dinner for Mr. Macmillan, to which were invited Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, Commerce Secretary Luther Hodges, Ambassador Averell Harriman, Central Intelligence chief Allen Dulles, the Atomic Energy Commission chairman, Glenn Seaborg, and special presidential assistant McGeorge Bundy.